

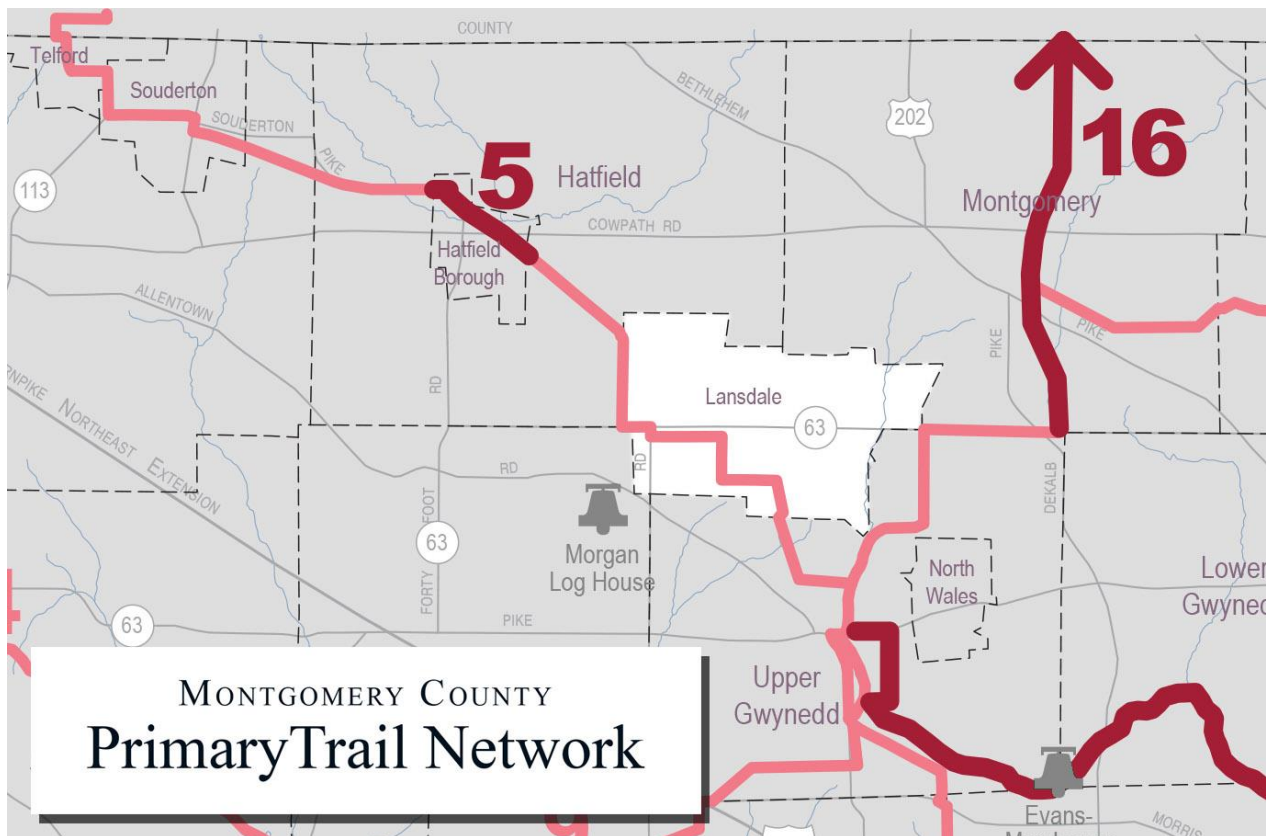


Liberty Bell Trail – Planning and Feasibility Study



Introduction to Current Study: Eight municipalities in Montgomery County are collaborating with the PA Environmental Council and consulting firm, Michael Baker International, to advance the planning of the Liberty Bell Trail (LBT). Those municipalities include Upper Gwynedd Township, North Wales Borough, Lansdale Borough, Hatfield Township, Hatfield Borough, Franconia Township, Souderton Borough and Telford Borough. A prior LBT Feasibility Study completed in 2005 investigated the potential development of the former 25-mile Liberty Bell Trolley route between Norristown to Quakertown into a shared use path network for walking and bicycling.

This feasibility study will provide an update to the 11-mile portion of the LBT in Montgomery County. In the last 16 years, some progress has been made towards its completion including construction of approximately 1.5 miles in Lansdale Borough and another 0.5 mile in Hatfield Borough. As part of this trail update, we will investigate changes that have occurred along the planned trail route, explore alternatives, and make recommendations for a preferred trail route. These technical tasks will be supported by a robust public outreach program using numerous virtual and traditional outreach techniques. The study is anticipated to be completed by early 2022.



This excerpt of Montgomery County's 2015 trail map shows trails in and around the study area. Number 5 is Liberty Bell Trail; 16 is 202 Parkway. (In Lansdale, an outdated future alignment of LBT is shown.)

Liberty Bell Trail History:

The LBT corridor has been nearly 250 years in the making. The path was first tread by a few brave colonists just before the British Army invaded Philadelphia, who carried the Liberty Bell out of Philadelphia to safety in Allentown, Pennsylvania. To celebrate the Liberty Bell, the colonists who rescued it, and American independence from Great Britain after the war, enterprising Pennsylvanians paraded the Bell up and down this corridor for public viewing.

In the early 1900s, as Philadelphia and its suburbs were rapidly expanding, the historic route colonists used to rescue the Liberty Bell over 100 years earlier was converted into the Liberty Bell Trolley Line. For the next half century, this trolley took Pennsylvanians from Philadelphia, through Norristown in Montgomery County and Quakertown in Bucks County to Allentown in Lehigh County.

As the use of automobiles became increasingly widespread from the 1920s-on, the Liberty Bell Trolley saw fewer and fewer passengers until 1951, when the Liberty Bell Trolley line ceased operations. Sadly, the rails and many of the trolley cars were immediately taken and scrapped for the Korean War effort.

What YOU Can Do:

How can YOU get involved in the Montgomery County Liberty Bell Trail feasibility study? First off, make sure you participate in the [WikiMap](#) and fill out the [associated survey](#). You can also reach out to your elected officials to express your support for the Liberty Bell Trail. If you would like to stay up to date on upcoming public meetings and events, be sure to check out [our webpage](#). Email Zhenya Nalywayko (Znalywayko@pecpa.org) if you would like to be placed on our mailing list. Thank you for your support!

Links:

- WikiMap & Survey: <https://wikimapping.com/Liberty-Bell-Trail.html>
- Pennsylvania Environmental Council LBT Webpage: <https://pecpa.org/program/liberty-bell-trail/>
- Zhenya “Z” Nalywayko email address: Znalywayko@pecpa.org



Figure 1-historical depiction of the Liberty Bell being moved out of Philadelphia.



Figure 2-the Liberty Bell Trolley line used to run through the study area; few pieces of the ROW remain.